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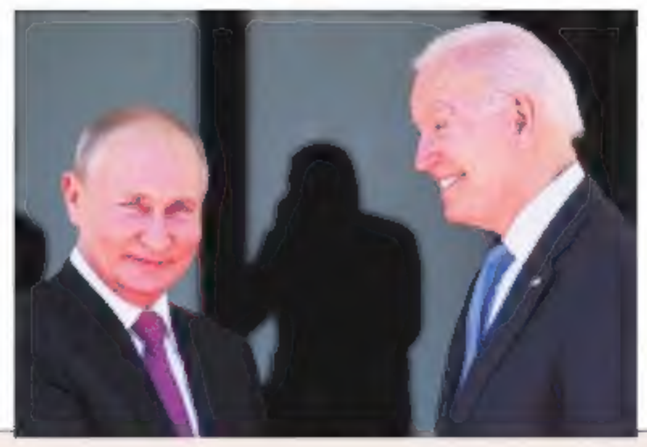

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CONSTRUCTIVE SUMMIT, SAYS PUTIN AFTER TALKS WITH BIDEN

The high-stakes meet in Switzerland came as ties between the two countries had hit a new low over a range of issues

ENVOYS TO RETURN TO THEIR POSTINGS

Describing the talks as constructive, Russian President Vladimir Putin said both countries would return their expelled envoys to their respective postings. They also agreed that cybersecurity was vital for both nations and decided to open a consulatation process. The summit was wrapped up in under three hours, though it was expected to go on for 4-5 hours

STARTS OFF WITH AN AWKWARD PHOTO OP

- It began with an awkward photo op, during which the two leaders appeared to avoid facing each other, indicating strain in bilateral ties, since Russia is accused of manipulating the US poll process
- There was no hostility in the talks, Putin said. Biden brought up the issue of human rights and dissident Navalny's arrest | P12

N-arms

TREATY TO BE BILATERALLY RENEGOTIATED, SAYS PUTIN

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Drugs used to treat Covid in adults not fit for kids: Govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE Centre on Wednesday issued detailed guidelines for treating children with Covid, emphasising that most of the drugs used for adults are not recommended for kids. Medicines like ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, favipiravir, doxycycline and azithromycin prescribed to adult patients have not been tested on children, it said.

However, it allowed the restricted use of remdesivir. Once vaccines are approved for children, those with comorbidities and those having severe symptoms would be prioritised for inoculation, the guidelines said.

"Children have less severe disease than adults. In the majority, the infection is asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic. It is uncommon to have moderate to severe Covid among healthy children," it said.

The government called for a combined effort from the public and private sectors to increase facilities to treat children. "A combined effort from the private and public sector is needed to handle any surge (in cases) in the future after the withdrawal of the lockdown over the next three to four months. The basic principles of equity and dignity of care should be followed."

It suggested designating specific areas in Covid facilities for pediatric care, adding parents should be allowed to accompany the child. "For children with multisystem inflammatory syndrome who test negative for acute Covid, care has to be provided by the existing pediatric facilities," it said.

RIGHT COVID CARE FOR CHILDREN: P16

KARNATAKA	JUNE 15	JUNE 16
Fresh cases	5,041	7,345
Recoveries	14,785	17,913
Deaths	115	148

NATIONWIDE	JUNE 15	JUNE 16
Fresh cases	60,471	62,224
Recoveries	1,17,525	1,07,628
Deaths	2,726	2,542

JAB-O-METER

TAKE YOUR SHOT
June 15: 25,68,858 doses
June 16: 32,62,233 doses
TOTAL DOSES: 26,53,17,472

Deliberate defiance by Twitter, says govt

Platform loses safe harbour shield; first FIR filed against it in Ghaziabad for failing to remove misleading content

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE ongoing sniping between the Centre and Twitter drew fresh blood on Wednesday with Union information technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad lashing out the microblogging site for failing to comply with new IT rules despite being given multiple opportunities.

The minister's attack came after Twitter appeared to have lost its safe harbour immunity, exposing it to being liable for platforming third-party content, as it failed to appoint the mandatory statutory officers in time. The first such case in which Twitter can face charges was filed in Ghaziabad on Tuesday, on the alleged assault on an elderly Muslim man on June 5. Twitter has been accused in the FIR of not proactively removing misleading content linked to the incident.

For its part, Twitter claimed it has already hired an interim Chief Compliance Officer (CCO). The new rules mandate the appointment of a CCO, a nodal officer and a resident grievance officer.

"We are keeping the MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) apprised of the progress at every step of the process. An interim Chief Compliance Officer has been retained and details will be shared with the ministry directly soon. Twitter continues to make every effort to comply with the new guidelines," a Twitter spokesperson said.

The CCO will be responsible for liaising between the company and government agencies on all kinds of legal requests received from various law enforcement organisations and government agencies relating to the platform.

Prasad said, "There are numerous queries arising as to whether Twitter is entitled to safe harbour provision. However, the simple fact of the matter is that Twitter has failed to comply with the Intermediary Guidelines that came into effect from the 26th of May."

Twitter, he said, was given multiple opportunities to comply with the rules, but has "deliberately chosen the path of non compliance. The culture of India varies like its large geography. In certain scenarios, with the amplification of social media, even a small spark can cause a fire, especially with the menace of fake news. This was one of the objectives of bringing the Intermediary Guidelines."

"It is astounding that Twitter, which portrays itself as the flagbearer of free speech, chooses the path of deliberate defiance when it comes to the Intermediary Guidelines," he remarked.

The minister also charged that the microblogging major was selective in applying its internal policy of flagging tweets as 'manipulated media' only when it suits its own likes and dislikes.

What happened in UP was illustrative of Twitter's arbitrariness in fighting fake news. While Twitter has been over-enthusiastic about its fact checking mechanism, its failure to act in multiple cases like UP is perplexing & indicates its inconsistency in fighting misinformation

Ravi Shankar Prasad

'ONLY COURTS CAN DECIDE ON TWITTER'

Twitter officials could face criminal and civil liability in India for non-compliance with the Social Intermediary Guidelines 2021. However, experts say only courts can decide if the site has complied with the provisions of the rules | P13

BJP Karnataka in-charge Arun Singh addresses the media in Bengaluru on Wednesday | VINOD KUMAR T

No party leader should make public comments that will dent the image of the party. Before making statements, stop and think if that will be good or bad for the party.

- Arun Singh, BJP General Secretary and Karnataka in-charge

Arun Singh heaps praise on BSY govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

BJP General Secretary and Karnataka in-charge Arun Singh's visit threw no surprises on the first day of his three-day visit to the State.

Swarmed by BJP leaders, ministers and cadres at the airport, Kumara Krupa guest house as well as the State BJP headquarters, Singh reiterated that there is no question of leadership change in Karnataka and insisted that his visit is to promote party activities, Union Government schemes and interact with ministers, cadres and legislators.

As part of his first official order of business, Singh met ministers of the BS Yediyurappa cabinet and pushed for better coordination between them and legislators. "All ministers have been asked to make themselves available every Thursday to meet legislators, party workers or even citizens," Singh told the media after the meeting with ministers.

Party sources said that Singh urged the ministers to mend any differences or lack of coordination with the party and cadres by being more attentive, accommodating and available.

Insisting that no talk of leadership change came up during the meeting, Singh repeated that the Yediyurappa government has been doing a good job and the focus of his visit is to promote party and government initiatives. But he did have a word of caution to party leaders making public statements that have become rather embarrassing for the BJP.

"No party leader should make public comments that will dent the image of the party. Before making statements, stop and think if that will be good or bad for the party," he said.

CONTINUED ON: P3

EXPRESS READ

'Pilot phase of Sputnik V in last leg'

Hyderabad: Dr Reddy's Laboratories said on Wednesday that the limited pilot soft launch of Russian vaccine Sputnik V that was initiated in Hyderabad on May 14, has now been scaled up to other cities, such as Visakhapatnam, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Delhi | P4

India's exports up 46 pc during June 1-14

New Delhi: India's exports rose by 46.43 per cent to $14.06 billion during June 1-14 on account of healthy growth in shipments in sectors such as engineering, gems and jewellery and petroleum products, according to preliminary data of the Commerce Ministry.

Panel to State Govt: Can reopen malls, restaurants from June 21

BACK TO BUSINESS

UNLOCK 2.0

SECOND PHASE (JUNE 21 - JULY 5)

Closed markets

Malls

Shopping lanes

Dine-in restaurants (50%)

Barber shops/salons, spas (50%)

Marriage halls @3.25 sq metres (up to 50 people with passes)

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

THE State Technical Advisory Committee on Covid-19, which seemed cautious earlier, at a recent meeting recommended that the State could reopen some economic activities like malls, dine-in restaurants, marriage halls, shopping complexes, shopping lanes and closed markets in unlock phase-2, starting from June 21, sources said.

But the number of people at these places will be limited, the sources added.

"Dine-in restaurants, barber shops/salons and spas should work with only 50 per cent capacity. Also, marriage halls can allow a maximum of 50 people," said a source privy to the details of the TAC meeting.

TAC also suggested an interval of two weeks between Unlock 2.0 and 3.0 as these activities are "high risk". "TAC has recommended that various parameters, like Test Positivity Rate (TPR) below 5 per cent; occupancy of oxygenated beds below 60 per cent etc, should be monitored at the district level before going for Unlock 3.0," an official said.

CONTINUED ON: P4

FINDING FORTUNE

SPAC firms to help startups list overseas

BISMAH MALIK @ Bengaluru

SPECIAL Purpose Acquisition Companies (SPAC) or blank cheque firms have been around in the US for almost two decades, they may also become reality in India soon as startups like Grofers, Flipkart are eyeing overseas acquisitions through SPAC mergers.

India's equity markets regulator, SEBI, earlier this year formed an expert committee to analyse the incorporation and listing of SPAC firms in India, a move that will enable new-age companies to list on domestic exchanges and seek the investment from equity markets when PE and venture deals get tougher to come by. Indian startups are following their counterparts in the US and Southeast Asia, which have been eyeing Nasdaq listings through billion dollar SPAC deals. Singapore's food delivery and ride-hailing giant Grab, for instance, is looking to list at a $40 billion valuation in the US through one of the biggest SPAC mergers later this year. US-based startup Thrasio, which acquires Amazon's private label brands, is also reportedly looking to go public through SPAC merger.

However, the US SEC recently cracked down on a number of firms, which listed through SPAC deals to enable warrants, as well as the ones which aren't able to acquire businesses in stipulated time. P13

SPAC LISTING IN GIFT CITY

In India, the recently notified International Financial Services Centre Authority has also put out a draft proposal for SPAC listings in Gujarat International Financial and Tec-City (GIFT City).